



# ***WAKE UP!***

President/ Editor  
Daniel P. Wheeler

Publisher

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Acton , Amesbury , Andover , Bedford , Beverly, Billerica , Burlington , Chelmsford , Concord , Danvers, Dracut , Gloucester, Haverhill, Holliston, Ipswich, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynnfield, Manchester, Marblehead, Maynard, Merrimac, Newburyport, North Chelmsford, North Reading , Peabody, Reading, Rockport, Salem , South Hamilton, Sudbury , Tewksbury , Topsfield, Wakefield , Wayland , Wilmington , Winchester

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National Business Agent Rick DiCecca's office held it's Region 14 Training and RAP Session from November 23-25 in Providence Rhode Island. Branch 25 members joined other members from New England for a weekend of training and a RAP session on Monday where NALC National President Brian Renfroe spoke on the Tentative Agreement and took questions. Pictured left to right are Branch 25 President Emeritus and RWCA Dave Barbuzzi, who led the Pledge of Allegiance, NBA DiCecca, and RGA Tony Bossi.

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## President's Message

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By the time you get this issue of the *Wake Up!*, the Open Season for the 2025 health benefits year will be almost over. This year has been busier than usual, with all the changes taking effect in 2025, including the switch from the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB) to the new Postal Service Health Benefits Program (PSHB). There have been many questions about what employees would or would not have to do. Everyone should have received a letter from OPM in October stating that if you are continuing with your current plan, then there is nothing you have to do. I still encourage everyone to use the [login.gov](https://login.gov) account to check that you are on the plan you want to be on going forward.

There has been much talk about the Tentative National Agreement since it came out in October. Most members have looked at it by now and probably know how they are voting. Now, the question is: When will I receive my ballot? From what I've been told, ballots are being printed as I write this and will go out in the mail at the end of the week after Thanksgiving. The ballots will be due back on January 13. Historically, the percentage of members who take the time to fill out a ballot and vote has been low. I hope that this time and at any time, every member will take the time to educate themselves on the Tentative Agreement and make their voice heard by voting.

I hope for a great turnout at our December branch meeting. There will be a couple of different things going on that will make this meeting different from the ordinary branch meeting. First of all, we will be having steward appreciation night. Being a steward is a tough job. Our members who have stepped up to serve in that role for their offices are significant assets to the branch. They are out there on the front lines, dealing with all the issues that affect letter carriers on a day-to-day basis. It's an often thankless job, and the branch appreciates what they do. We will acknowledge them at the December meeting, and it would be great to have other members from their offices there to support them.

The December meeting will also be the installation of branch officers for the 2025-2028 term. NALC National President Brian Renfroe will be there to perform the installation. December's meeting is an excellent opportunity for members who want to hear from our national president and have not had the chance to do so at any other forums he has spoken at recently. If none of those reasons I mentioned grab your attention, we will have Chinese food instead of regular pizza in December, so come out for that. I hope to see you there!

As a reminder to those carriers who have been around a while and to those newer carriers who may not know, the penalty overtime exclusion period runs from November 30 until December 27 this year. There are a couple of

things that change during the penalty exclusion period. First, during this period, there is no penalty overtime paid for work, which would be penalty time for the rest of the year. For regular carriers, that would be to work over ten hours on a regularly scheduled day, work over eight hours on a non-scheduled day, overtime worked on a carrier's fifth regularly scheduled day, and work on the seventh day of the week. For PTFs and CCAs, this would mean any work over ten hours a day or over fifty-six hours a week.

The second significant change during the penalty exclusion period is that the twelve and sixty-hour work limits for a day and week are not in effect for carriers on the Overtime Desired List (ODL) or Work Assignment List (WAL) during this period. These carriers may be required to work past these limits; however, for carriers not on the ODL and PTFs/CCAs, there is no change to the daily or weekly hour limits that are in effect for the rest of the year. I hope to see some new faces at the December meeting!

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler



How most letter carriers are feeling at this time of year....

## Executive Vice-President's Message

Seeing the year winding down quickly, anyone with more than 520 hours of earned Annual Leave in the books should be looking to take some time off soon, to avoid forfeiting any leave. Management must make the effort to prevent you from forfeiting annual leave. Anyone that has an AL request denied that would result in forfeiting leave should contact your steward and the branch immediately. There is no limit on how much sick leave can be accumulated. By the time this is in print, we will be towards the end of Open Season for health benefits. If you are not keeping the plan you are already enrolled in, please make a choice soon. I hear there have been some delays with the process at the beginning, so don't wait until the last minute. Open Season ends December 9<sup>th</sup>.

We talk about this all the time, but I can't emphasize enough the difference between scheduled leave and unscheduled leave. Management is constantly scrutinizing carriers' attendance because of unscheduled absences. The ELM states that we should try to avoid unscheduled absences. It always is not avoidable, but there are also times when we could document the absences better. If you make an appointment with a doctor in the future, you should immediately request leave for it. There is no time limit to request sick leave. You can easily show an email or text that verifies the appointment. This way your appointments are scheduled.

If you are out sick and a doctor gives you a note for multiple days, inform your supervisor immediately so that most of the days are recorded as scheduled leave. Notifying management that you will be out multiple days may also trigger them to record the absence as pending FMLA. Normally, if you are out with the same condition for 3 days or more, there is a good chance it is FMLA protected. If you believe that is the case, always request that the leave is considered FMLA, and that request should generate paperwork sent to your address of record. If there are any questions when you receive the paperwork, call the Union office or the FMLA number on the paperwork, because there are time limits to return the documents. Properly recording leave as scheduled as opposed to unscheduled, can make a difference.

I have noticed since we set the clocks back and darkness comes early, that there are a lot of LLVs driving around with lights that are not working. I hope it is because the carriers don't realize they are broken. I realize the LLVs no longer have a Long Life, but we should not be driving

around in the dark with trucks with missing lights. Please do your vehicle check in the morning and if something is defective with the LLV, you are not required to use it. Some managers will try to get you to use it, but if the lights are out, another vehicle may not see you fully. If your wipers don't work and it rains or snows, this could be a safety hazard. If you have any issues with this, see your steward.

Hopefully, we will get a big crowd at the December branch meeting on December 10th. We will be having a steward appreciation along with food and the installation of branch officers. As of now National President Renfroe will conduct the installation. Come out and support your steward. Have a great Christmas and New Year or anything else you may celebrate this time of year. Be safe and keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

December 7	Pearl Harbor Day
December 9	Open Season Ends
December 10	<b>Regular Branch Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Chinese food served at 7:00 PM Steward Appreciation Night Installation of Branch Officers President Brian Renfroe</b>
December 21	Winter Solstice
December 25	Christmas Day

Daniel P. Wheeler	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Gilbert Paredes	Vice President
Joe Stearns	Secretary
James Metilinos	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
Doug Murray	Sergeant At Arms
Dan Raske	Chairman of Trustees
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
Tony Porciello	Trustee
Bob Cronin	Trustee
Sandi Mannas	Trustee
Andrew Dencklau	Assistant Treasurer
Andy Coan	Assistant Secretary
Jeremy Provost	Assistant Safety Officer
James Tuttle	Assistant Wake Up Publisher
Wesley Tugman	Assistant Health Ben. Rep.

*Your "Wake-Up!" is produced in-house at the Branch 25 Union office each and every month.*



While many employees on comp are paid by the Department of Labor (DOL), these payments are reimbursed to the DOL annually. The reason we are over \$3B more in the red since last year stems directly from OWCP. Discount rate changes increased by \$2.2B, leading the way for further indebtedness for the Postal Service. As you can see from the chart, new cases continue to rise and likely will not drop any time sooner. Many of us have seen increased discipline related to attendance and during the RAP Session at the end of November, the regional officers indicated USPS, and its management will likely attempt to bring discipline to employees potentially in a comp or long-term leave without pay status. While FMLA leave and comp statuses are protected, we've all seen Postal Management overstep in issuing unfair and unjust discipline. This is not intended to concern or scare anyone, but only to further exemplify the ongoing issues the service has.

Lastly, I've included a simple breakdown of revenue versus expenses for the service.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
STATEMENTS OF OPERATIONS

(in millions)	Year Ended September 30,		
	2024	2023	2022
<b>Revenue</b>			
Operating revenue	\$ 79,537	\$ 78,186	\$ 78,507
Other revenue	10	197	113
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>79,547</b>	<b>78,383</b>	<b>78,620</b>
<b>Operating expenses</b>			
Compensation and benefits	54,078	52,853	51,520
Retirement benefits	10,427	10,001	8,362
Workers' compensation	3,799	538	(2,119)
Transportation	8,815	10,111	10,281
Other operating expenses	12,346	11,884	11,526
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>89,465</b>	<b>85,387</b>	<b>79,570</b>
<b>Loss from operations before the impact of Postal Service reform legislation</b>	<b>(9,918)</b>	<b>(7,004)</b>	<b>(950)</b>
Impact of Postal Service reform legislation	—	—	56,975
<b>(Loss) income from operations</b>	<b>(9,918)</b>	<b>(7,004)</b>	<b>56,025</b>
Interest and investment income	958	941	192
Interest expense	(560)	(415)	(171)
<b>Net (loss) income</b>	<b>\$ (9,520)</b>	<b>\$ (6,478)</b>	<b>\$ 56,046</b>

Come out to our December meeting! President Brian Renfroe will be in attendance for the installation of officers and will likely be taking questions you may have regarding the Tentative Agreement or anything else you might have! I look forward to seeing everyone there.

Winter is coming...

James Metilinos

**BRANCH 25 RETIREE GRATUITY VOUCHER**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(as it will appear on plaque)

P.O. Retiring from: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Retirement date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note: Retiree must be a member in good standing at date of retirement. Retiree has 4 months from retirement date to remit this voucher to the branch office. Please mail to: NALC Branch 25  
2500 Main St, Suite 201, Tewksbury Ma, 01876

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## Secretary's Report

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I want to start this month's article by thanking Andy Coan, the Assistant Secretary. Andy has decided to not run again for this position. I cannot say enough about how much Andy has done to help me get a handle on the job of secretary. Between the late-night meetings at the union office or the many phone calls and text messages, he was always right there for me. If I couldn't make a meeting no worries, Andy is there. He has dedicated many years of service to the branch, and I know not only myself, but the whole branch thanks him. I know he isn't going anywhere and will still be at the meetings, but I wanted to take this time to again to give a huge THANK YOU. And don't worry Andy, I won't let you get out that easily, I am sure I will still be calling with questions.

Another month goes by and more talk about the Tentative Agreement between the NALC and the USPS. I was unable to be at the November meeting but listened to the recording of it when I typed up the minutes. Ric DiCecca came up and gave a lot of information about the financial portion and the workroom portions of the agreement. He also spoke about what happens if ratified and if it isn't ratified. I will not go into detail here because I think everyone should make their own decision about how they want to vote. Please, please, and please read the agreement and make an educated decision. If you do not understand something in it, then call the union office and ask any question you have. There is a lot to this, and it is vital to know and understand what you are reading. The ballots for this should be coming out around the beginning of December. **DO NOT THROW THESE OUT!!!!!!** Fill them out and **VOTE** for what you and only you have decided. Do not think your vote doesn't matter because I assure you it does.

NALC President Brian Renfroe will be attending our December meeting on Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup>. He will be there to install the officers of branch 25. He will also be speaking to those in attendance, and I am sure will answer any questions you might have about the TA. This meeting will also be Steward Appreciation night as they will be honored as well. Bring your appetite because Chinese food will be on the menu.

I recently sent out letters to each office with information about the two \$1000 scholarships available to any graduating high school seniors. They should be hanging on your office union board. The Mass AFL-CIO

administers the scholarships. Applicants must register no later than 5pm on Friday December 20, 2024, at [www.massaficio.org/scholarships](http://www.massaficio.org/scholarships). Tests will be held at the student's high school, and they will determine the testing dates and times. Study material is available at [www.learnlaborhistory.com](http://www.learnlaborhistory.com). Four years ago, my daughter was a recipient of one of these scholarships and I can tell you that every bit helps. This also reminds me that she will be graduating college this May. God where has the time gone?????? The NALC also gives out 5 \$4000 scholarships. The deadline for those scholarships is December 31<sup>st</sup>. The information and requirements can be found in the members benefits section at NALC.org.

The end of the year is fast approaching, and I cannot believe how fast this year has gone by. I hope you all enjoyed Thanksgiving with your family and friends. The holiday season is about to hit. Package volume is about to go crazy both what we deliver and what we order for ourselves. While this season will bring long days and lots of hours, make sure you find time for yourselves and loved ones. I wish everyone who celebrates a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

As I always end this, if you have moved, please update your address with the branch. You can call, write, or email me at [JESBR25@gmail.com](mailto:JESBR25@gmail.com). See you at the branch meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Last month due to spacing my world famous (at least I think so) Snapple fact had to be omitted so you get 2 this month.

Snapple Fact # 419 A jiffy is an actual time measurement equaling 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a second.

Snapple Fact # 705 Every ton of recycled paper saves about 17 trees.



Joe Stearns

best wishes  
for a  
*Healthy Balance*  
this season

The holiday season for USPS brings a surge in mail volume and customer demands, making it crucial to find a balance. Here's a guide with practical tips designed to help you manage this busy time effectively and maintain your well-being:

**Stay organized by planning your days and preparing for peak times.** Keep track of personal and workplace responsibilities with a planner or digital calendar. Organize your daily tasks by priority. Before busy periods, plan and prepare your day or tasks to ensure you're as efficient as possible. Staying organized can help manage increased workloads and reduce stress.

**Set realistic and manageable goals.** Divide larger tasks into smaller, manageable steps. Set achievable goals for each day and focus on completing one task at a time to avoid feeling overwhelmed by the workload. Avoid overcommitment by being realistic about what you can accomplish during the holiday season. Prioritize essential tasks and adjust your goals to match the increased demands.

**Make time for friends and family.** Despite the busy schedule, set aside time to connect with family and friends. Whether it's a phone call, a meal together, or a brief visit, these interactions provide essential emotional support. Engage in holiday activities that fit your schedule. Even small traditions can bring joy and help you stay connected to the festive spirit.

**Embrace flexibility and adapt to change.** Be prepared to adjust your plans and priorities as needed. Flexibility is crucial in managing unexpected changes or challenges that arise during the busy season.

**By implementing these strategies, you can better manage the demands of the holiday season and maintain a healthy balance. For more on balancing personal and professional obligations, reach out to the EAP.**



**CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968**  
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341  
[WWW.EAP4YOU.COM](http://WWW.EAP4YOU.COM)

# Treasurer's Report

I didn't spend any time in my previous article speaking about the Tentative Agreement, but as we've all seen, it's finally here in front of us. This agreement has created polarization amongst many members, specifically over the economic portion of this agreement. I don't intend to encourage or persuade folks how to vote, but I would like to bring some brief discussion as to how we have arrived at the economic portion of this contract. The Postal Service recently released their annual Form 10-K, a form that all public companies file with the Securities and Exchange Commission annually. This form is a comprehensive document that details the company's financial obligations and performance over the fiscal year and lends insight into the viability of the company. At the Regional RAP Session, President Brian Renfroe spoke at length and offered information on USPS losses since 2012, but also indicated these losses are not part of the bargaining process or considered during negotiations. Regardless, the Postal Service continues to state they have no money. So... Where is it going?

First: pricing. The Postal Service's pricing regarding its "market-dominant services" is controlled through the Postal Regulatory Commission and is subject to a price cap. What is a market-dominant service? Things like first class and marketing mail, periodicals, international mail, and a few select package services. The price cap for these products and services are more easily recognized as a ceiling, as any rate changes cannot exceed the current Consumer Price Index (CPI [read: inflation]) from the prior 12 months. If CPI sounds familiar, it's likely because that's how our COLA's are calculated. We receive one cent for every .4-point increase from CPI. The problem USPS continues to run into is operational revenue is capped due to the pricing model, yet its operational costs are not. This means USPS can far outspend what it can earn, which it has done every year since 2012, anywhere between \$1B in annual losses, all the way up to \$15.5B in losses in 2012. This year alone, USPS lost \$9B, even though early projections from the Delivering for America plan had USPS breaking even in 2023 and posting profit this year. USPS has more flexibility in competitive services, like express mail, ground advantage, priority, and more, but the majority (58%) of its revenue comes from market-dominant services, which relies entirely on volume. Across the board, our market-dominant services continue to decline

while package volume grows.

Second: employees. USPS employs over 639,000 people, with 533,000 of them being career employees. Roughly 33% of USPS employees are City Letter Carriers. The NALC is the largest craft bargaining unit USPS has and costs the most money. This tentative agreement alone is projected to cost USPS around \$4B in wages, with over half of these increases coming from COLAs alone. USPS projects the COLAs in 2025 to cost around \$528M. On page 13 of USPS's 2024 10-K, the report states USPS could face a reduction in workforce to help offset losses from caps due to CPI. Additionally, the report ambitiously reveals an arbitrator is under no statute to consider the financial condition of the Postal Service, and an unfavorable arbitration for any of the craft's contracts could result in the inability to meet future financial obligations.

Third: OWCP. OWCP paid out \$2.5B in claims in 2022, which is the last annual report available on their website. USPS was responsible for \$1.22B, nearly HALF of all claims for federal employees.

<i>(in millions)</i>	2024	2023
Impact of discount rate changes	\$ 1,105	\$ (1,114)
Actuarial revaluation of existing cases	1,352	548
Costs of new cases	1,245	1,010
Administrative fee	97	94
<b>Total workers' compensation expense</b>	<b>\$ 3,799</b>	<b>\$ 538</b>
Less cash payments made by DOL on behalf of workers' compensation obligations	(1,635)	(1,475)
<b>Total non-cash component of workers' compensation expense (benefit) (non-GAAP)</b>	<b>\$ 2,164</b>	<b>\$ (937)</b>

(continued on page 4)



# **WAKE UP**

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TEWKSBURY, MA



*at the next meeting*  
**December, 10**  
**K of C Wilmington**  
**8:00 PM**



Peabody retiree Jack Murtagh received his 35-year NALC Membership Pin at the November branch meeting. Congratulations Jack!